

From H. B. ...
Gentle

NICE FOREIGNERS' EVANGELIZATION COMMITTEE.

MAY, 1866.

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PERSECUTION AT BARLETTA.

In order that the Christian public may understand the state of things at Barletta at present and previous to the martyrdom of the Christians there, short extracts from the Reports of the Nice Foreigners' Evangelization Committee are here collected, narrating the origin and progress of the Evangelical Mission in that city. An exact account of the sad events of the 19th March will be added from the letter of Gianini, the Evangelist who was labouring there at the time.

Extracts from the letters of Mr. Meyer, employed by the Scotch Church as a missionary to the Jews at Ancona, will also be given, who has long been acquainted with the work, and who boldly and generously hastened to the spot after the massacre to comfort and encourage the poor afflicted converts.

Many inexact reports have appeared in the public papers on the subject, which these letters will serve to correct.

A few lines from recent communications addressed to the Committee by their Evangelists will show what is the present state of affairs.

Giannini was first employed by the Nice Foreigners' Evangelization Committee in 1861, and has since that period worked along the Adriatic coast, visiting many towns and villages, as Ancona and Pesaro in 1861, Urbino and Fano in 1862; in which latter place a

popular tumult, and cries of "Death to the Protestants" were raised against him, and his children were followed and beaten in the streets. In 1863 he visited Rimini, and continued the work at Pesaro and Fano; in 1864, Pescara, Sinigaglia, and Chieti, the capital of the Abruzzi. Persecutions of the converts at Pesaro became violent; several drew back in consequence, and he himself was much cast down; but Mr. Meyer was then, as he has always continued to be, his steadfast friend. They visited Sinigaglia together at the time of the fair, two days of great interest, when he writes thus:—"Mr. Meyer laboured three times more than I did, and the discussions took place at the stall of his colporteur!" In 1865 he continued the work at Pesaro and in districts neighbouring and more remote, extending his itinerating mission as far as the Neapolitan frontier. He was more than once associated with Mr. Meyer, who bore a pleasing testimony to his usefulness in a letter addressed to one of the members of the Nice Committee; as well as to the peculiar difficulties of the country in which he labours. Superstition has fearfully degraded the ignorant population, and it is indeed a triumph of grace when the simple Gospel takes possession of the heart. He had then once more to encounter every species of open and sometimes of violent persecution, and had often to mourn over disappointed hopes, at the sight of some who at first cordially welcomed him, but afterwards drew back under priestly influence, or the fear of reproach connected with a steadfast acceptance of the Gospel. In spite of all hindrances, he was permitted to see some fruit of his labours. Besides the little church gathered at Pesaro, there were believers at Chieti, Pescara, and other places. Some idea of his personal character under deep affliction may be gathered from the following extracts from one of his letters:—

"Pesaro, 29th December, 1864.—In the profoundest grief I acquaint you with the heavy trial which the Lord has laid on me. On the 17th, a boy of nine years of age fell sick, and on the 19th he was taken from me. This loss too, has opened afresh past wounds, and when it is remembered that in two years the Lord has taken from me three sons—all grown—it is almost enough to deprive me of my senses, and indeed I and my poor wife have been almost in this state. The Gay family have shown us much Christian affection, and have greatly assuaged the trial by sharing our grief. The son was greatly beloved by all his school-fellows. The New Testament was his chief delight; and in the evening, when I explained to them the Gospel, our hearts would beat with joy in hearing his answers to my questions."

On the 13th March, 1865, one year within a few days of the massacre at Barletta, there was great fear of an outbreak of a somewhat similar kind at Pesaro, and yet some of the converts there were proposing to purchase for their meetings a small building which had been used as a convent. This, however, Giannini, discouraged for the moment, not thinking the work as yet sufficiently advanced for such a step.

Barletta, it appears, was visited by a Colporteur in 1863, and Mr. Meyer went and preached there for a short time in 1864. Giannini went there on the 21st July, 1865, and on the 22nd engaged a large room for the meetings. In writing from Pesaro, 29th September, 1865, he says:—

"Upon the 21st July I arrived in Barletta, and on the 22nd engaged a large room. For three or four evenings the meetings consisted of six persons; for a few

evenings following there were thirty; and a little later still, fifty; and great was the desire manifested to hear the Word of God. These meetings were held up to the 28th of August without cessation, and I at length left the brethren at Barletta, with a promise to return to them.

“Pesaro, October 11th, 1865.—I am waiting from day to day for the call to visit Porto di Fermo, where dear Mr. Meyer has taken a room, there to announce the Gospel. This is entirely a new field of labour to which I am called.”

On the 11th November, he again writes of Fermo:—

“I have to tell you that Mr. Meyer, in the month of August, spoke to some persons, and they persuaded him to hire a room in the house of one who was to form a member of the congregation. Having gone there to commence the work of Evangelization, along with Mr. Meyer, who has paid all my expenses, these persons hid themselves from us; no one was visible, and we were made the laughing-stock of the place. We then discovered that there had been a plot in order to get hold of 80 francs, and, convinced that it was so, we for the present departed.”

He was afterwards disappointed of the room above mentioned, but obtained another. In a letter received from him on the 24th February last, less than a month before the massacre, he says:—

“I have delayed acknowledging your letter, as I desired to inform you how, on the 18th, we partook of the Holy Supper, which for some time several had demanded, and I would not deny their request. The communicants were seventeen. Many others had requested to be received, but having made them understand their responsibility, and the responsibility of all who are brethren in receiving those who have not given evidence of a change of life, and how serious the matter is in the sight of the Lord, it was determined to the entire satisfaction of all parties, to wait for some time. . . . The room was so full that many had to stand. The scene was truly a moving one from the silence, the respect, and the seriousness that prevailed; and all seemed subdued by the power of God.”

His letter concludes thus:—

“When the time comes for me to retire, if it pleases the Lord, it will be necessary to think seriously of this field, for it cannot be that it should be abandoned at the point to which the Lord has brought the work.”

It was a sense of his own insufficiency for a work such as appeared to be this opening before him which made him feel and write thus. He had expressed this in a previous letter. The Nice Foreigners' Evangelization Committee, therefore, had passed a resolution at their meeting of the 26th February to engage as schoolmaster a converted priest, who had conducted a school whilst still a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, and to send him as a help and encouragement to Giannini at Barletta, he having asked for an instructor for the children of the converts. A few days afterwards it was yet further resolved to send one of their two experienced Evangelists at Milan—Lagomarsino, and Tealdo—for a time to Barletta. Lagomarsino, in reply, in a letter dated 12th March, just a week before the outbreak, stated his readiness to go, but requested that his departure might be delayed for a few days, on account of some pressing matters which he had in hand at Milan; and thus his life as well as that of Signor Cossù, the priest and schoolmaster who was to accompany him, was probably preserved through the good providence of God.

“BARLETTA, *March*, 13, 1866.

“I trust I shall not be wearisome in continuing to give you good tidings of the Lord's work. The good God be ever praised that His Holy Word is announced to many persons, and that remarkable conversions are manifested. The hall begins to

be insufficient in size. It is true that there is a very small room adjoining, but this also every evening is occupied during the evangelization by seven or eight persons, ladies and gentlemen. The fire of persecution has reached its height, those who are objects of the priests' anger being driven from their occupations; but the Lord Jesus renders them strong to suffer for His name. A young man of nineteen years has been expelled from the house by his own father, and is necessitated to quit Barletta and seek his bread elsewhere. His prayers in the meetings were full of spiritual life, he is not much instructed, but reads the Word of God well. He was a devotee of the Church of Rome, but when God revealed to him His grace, he received it into his heart and became a good and true Christian. The priests cry out against us unsparingly; and in the shops, on the piazza, and in the houses, they talk of nothing but the Protestants. The common people do all they can to endanger the brethren, but thanks be to the Lord, hitherto we have nothing to deplore of a grave character. To myself they use bad words, and frequently a stone is thrown at me. On Wednesday I received a letter mentioning that in the evening some men would come armed into the meeting, put to me some questions, and then violently take away my life. So said the letter. The matter becoming known to the brethren, the room was crowded, so that there was no standing-place. But what disturbed me was that almost all were armed with large sticks. Three individuals came up the stairs, and one of them approached the door to look in, and found some excuse for passing in; but a brother, strong as a lion, perceiving what he was about, put him out, and while following him discovered the two others behind the staircase, and caused them all to descend very rapidly.

"On Thursday I received a deputation sent by a priest, proposing to me a discussion. In the position in which I found myself I could not refuse; and, having made my declaration as to the terms on which we should meet, I let them go. I am, however, glad to tell you that the priest was not willing to come into my hall, and thus all is finished. The Lord Jesus knows well how to order this work, and He confounds our enemies. To His holy name be honour and glory.

"Yesterday (Sunday) some Bibles were burnt in the church, and the priest made allusions to an *auto-da-fé*, from which the common people conclude that I ought to be dragged through the town. But, notwithstanding all that the priests and common people say, the meeting acquires more life. If the Lord would provide in some way for the instruction of the children, we should have a marvellous work. I am indeed glad to assure you that the work goes on admirably, though most unpleasant expedients are brought to bear against it. God is wiser and more powerful than His enemies."

The Evangelist then proceeds to speak of some domestic matters relative to his wife and family, and then goes on—

"At Pesaro, after public preaching, a colporteur arrived who made an extraordinary sale of Bibles and Testaments. However it be, I have not the faith to labour there any longer, and unless one does this work in faith, it is better to leave it altogether. For the present I have only to add my request for your prayers and those of all the dear brethren who take a deep interest in the Lord's work, that all things be for His glory, and that He may give me true spiritual wisdom along with great humility.

Yours, &c.,

"GAETANO GIANNINI."

"Yesterday, after I had sealed this letter, I received a summons from the Delegato. He, on the part of the Sotto Prefetto, said that he wished to speak with me. The same evening we were assembled—the Delegato, Sotto Delegato, and Secretary. They inquired if I knew who they were who wished to kill me. I replied, 'No,' but they had the names of several persons, with two priests at their head. This morning the Sotto Prefetto desired to speak with me, and recommended the utmost prudence on my part, and inquired if I had given money to women to induce them to come to the Meeting. You may believe what was my answer. He desired also to know the number of the attendants. I told him the truth; that upon the evenings of evangelization there always came from sixty to eighty persons, and that more would come if there were room. Upon my thus replying, he said, 'Dear Sir, I know all. Be ever prudent as you have hitherto been, and if we can bring to an issue or suppress this conspiracy against you, the authors of it shall be severely punished.' It is repugnant to me to speak of the dangers by which I am surrounded, but the con-

dition of the lower orders and of the mob is terrific. Conceive that last Monday they came to my landlord and told him they wished to see the naked man and the naked woman of whom I made there a spectacle every night. Pardon me if I weary you. On Sunday a poor man who gave entertainments in the streets was there. The common people cried out, 'He has a devil, and is excommunicated,' and rushed after him, inflicting blows, so that the police had to use force to set him at liberty, all wounded as he was. From this you may understand with what people we have to do. I have, however, a profound confidence in the Lord, that not a hair shall fall unless it be His holy will. But I ought not to be the less urgent in asking all those dear brethren who are interested in me to pray for the good of my family and of my own soul.

Yours, &c.,

"GAETANO GIANNINI."

Translation of letter of Gaetano Giannini :—

"PESARO, *March 27th*, 1866.

"DEAR MR. GORDON.

"I fear much that you have already heard of the rising and of the barbarisms committed in Barletta upon the 19th. Being now in the midst of my family through the mercy of God, I send you a narrative of the events, but with a mind still disordered.

"On the 19th, at three p.m., I was in front of the balcony of our hall, when some one made a menacing sign, and gave me to understand that he sought my life. I said to the owner of the house, 'Signore Philip, there is a movement of the people; my life is in danger!' He, like a wise man, made me close the window, and we sat down each upon the divan; suddenly two boys, of the ages of thirteen and fourteen, sons of two dear brethren, entered, and threw themselves upon my neck and cried, 'Signore Gaetano, the populace seek your blood, your life!' The owner went into the gallery, and seeing that the crowd came from 'the place' with the cry of death, desired me to come with him upon the roof, and pointed out the direction. I entreated the children to leave me alone, but they said, 'No; we will die with you!' and I led them with me from roof to roof. After a long progress in this manner, I found a dormer window, which gave entrance to a house, but the moment I had placed foot in it, the owner of it came and severely drove me out. I committed our souls to the Lord, and resumed our way, and having found a terrace upon which we might jump, I descended first, and afterwards took down the boys. But that was not a place for us, and seeing another little terrace, I descended, and drew down the boys, and looking about anxiously, I discovered a door half closed. I opened the door like a robber, and seeing a bed, I took my two dear ones and placed them with me under the bed, one on my right hand, and the other on my left. They united their almost dying voices with my feeble prayer to the Lord. But we were interrupted, for people came close to us in order to approach the window to see the raging populace. All of a sudden appeared a 'canonico,' who went round the room, and hearing that he was the proprietor, our hearts died within us. About dusk I took the children, with a view to escape, by the way by which we had come, but found it difficult to ascend. Finding some stones and placing them under my feet, I made the boys mount up and then followed myself; but the second necessary step was even more difficult. According to the will of the good God I was able to place one boy above in safety, and then joined him; but at the moment when I stretched out my hand to raise the boy who was left, came upon us the proprietor and said, 'Remain in the room!' Presenting myself to him half dead with the boys I implored his compassion. That dear man conducted us into another room, where we were secure, and could not be seen by anyone. The night advanced, and I again thought of sending away the boys to their homes. I did so one at a time. But one of them found his father barbarously murdered. I then begged the proprietor to inform the sous-préfet that I was safe, and that he had provided for the security of my life. He sent his brother to carry the message. The sous-préfet sent immediately a captain-superintendent of excisemen with his men, and I was conducted into the military fort, in order to my safety.

"Signor Philippo Fusco, the proprietor of our hall, when he returned from the roof to which he had conducted me, returned into his apartment, and found his wife, with an infant of five months in her arms, wounded in the forehead, who had, with her left arm, warded off several blows of a stick. He had strength to take his wife

and conduct her to a place of safety above the terrae. He then, with the courage of a lion, presented himself to these evil-doers, saying, 'Brethren of Barletta, I am your friend, your brother; do not take away my life.' They cried, 'Give us the Protestants and all will be over;' but he refused, saying that I had escaped, upon which a blow from a stick fell upon his head. Among the crowd there arose a confusion, some wishing him dead, and others desiring to preserve his life, and he profiting by the moment, succeeded in saving himself by ascending to the roof where he had conducted us. The mob, thirsting for blood and plunder, destroyed the furniture, threw everything from the balconies into the street, beds and all else, even the doors from their hinges, the windows, &c., and consigned all to the flames; pouring spirits upon them in order to consume all more speedily. After this they entered the apartment of his brother-in-law on the other side of the building, and having found a young man, our dear friend, they poniarded him, and threw him from the balcony upon the fire, and then all the furniture, beds, &c. Of that building there remains only the walls, and men and women escaped with only the clothes upon their backs. The same lot befel a dear brother, a seller of wine; all was robbed and burned, and wine and oil were poured out in large quantities, with many dresses and other articles. A fourth brother, after having all that his house contained burned, was barbarously murdered. While under the blows of the dagger he declared Jesus Christ to be his Saviour. This man, dear to me in the Lord, was father of the boy who was with me on the roof. There remains the desolate mother with a girl and boy of the ages of thirteen and fourteen. The mother is converted, and all the family were the glory of the Church of Barletta. A fifth brother suffered the loss of all his furniture, but his life was preserved by the mercy of God. Many brethren escaped into the country, but a cordon was drawn round, and with great difficulty they escaped. At the approach of night they believed that all danger was ended. A priest presented himself to them as a friend, and after talking with them took his leave. But in a very little time they saw him on horseback with a number of the country people. The brethren took to flight, and fortunately, the night being advanced, pursuers and pursued missed each other, and the latter, each thinking to preserve his own life, they all escaped, many thanks be to the Lord. The first arrested were three priests and a Capuchin, and in the course of the 20th, about seventy-two persons were conducted into the fort where I was. In the evening about six o'clock a strong body of troops came into the fort, took the prisoners, conducted them to the station, and by special train they were forwarded to Trani. On the 21st other arrests were made, to the number of about thirty persons, and among them was a gentleman of position, upon whom was found a list of families who were to be sacrificed on that day—the number was seventy-nine families, not persons. Upon another canonico were found articles belonging to the proprietor of my house. All those who were arrested I have seen, because, as they passed along the square of the fort, they saw me and I saw them. The brethren so brutally murdered are three in number, and another poor young man a Roman Catholic, who being taken for a Protestant was stoned, and his corpse dragged about. Of these three brethren, however, only one was a communicant. Of the people ten were killed with the bayonet, and many wounded. The Delegato received a dagger wound so as to endanger his life, he having a likeness to me. Our dear brother referred to before was wounded in the forehead and in the side, but, thanks to the Lord, without any danger. The furious multitude rushed to the house of the sous-préfet, believing that I had taken refuge there. The sous-préfet, with some of his men, was obliged to take refuge upon his terrace, and from that somewhere else, but was wounded by the tiles which were thrown at him. The commandant of the fort, Signor Guiseppe Robatti, has treated me as if I were his own son.

"A gentleman of Barletta, who had come from America to visit his mother, having heard that there was a meeting of Protestants, came to find me on the Lord's day morning, when I was making a reading with my dear children. Having asked some questions, he expressed his satisfaction with all, and gave me to understand that he was himself employed in the Lord's work. In the evening he came to the meeting, and was amazed at the number of the audience. He put some questions to the brethren and to the boys, and it was easily seen that he was a man very intelligent in the Word of God. When the preaching was ended, he kissed me with much love, and gave thanks to the Lord Jesus for so great a benefit received.

"When the sad events of the 19th occurred, having heard that I had been killed

he went to the sous-préfet to learn if it were true. Learning how the Lord had preserved me, he came to the fort, and seeing me, he ceased not to embrace me.

"All his solicitude turned towards me, and seeing that I had only a cap on my head, he gave me 20 francs to buy me a hat, and anything I wanted at the moment. The name of this gentleman is C. D. Andrea Passaro, who came to visit me twice a day. On the 23rd he was in my company along with other brethren, awaiting the order from the sous-préfet for my departure. The Commandant of the Fort, returning from the sous-préfet, told me I might go by the train of half-past nine, and gave me 50 francs for my journey. The brother Passaro then took me by the arm, and as we went together out of the fort, many brethren met us. Passing through the centre of the city, I found myself surrounded by more than fifty brethren. Tears were shed, and my face was covered with kisses. The scene was a very moving one. Many gentlemen raised their hats in token of their great sympathy. Work was abandoned to come and see and salute the victim who was to have been sacrificed upon the altar of barbarism. Many whom I had never spoken with entreated me to return soon to Barletta. At the station were many people; and to the brethren I addressed a few words upon the subject of the forgiveness which they ought to accord to our enemies as a manifestation of the Christian character. There was not an eye among the brethren which did not weep, as well as did many others. When I entered the train and departed, I was saluted by the taking off of hats, and many women saluted me whom I had never seen. The blood of our Martyrs of Barletta is a great triumph for the Gospel. The fire which I have left behind cannot be extinguished. I cannot speak or write to give you a more exact account of that scene, and of the requests made to me to return as soon as possible there among them.

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Here he sets forth his losses, and then goes on to say:—

"Of clothes I have only what I wore on the 19th. The brother Gay has lent me a shirt. Having thus given a statement of what has befallen me, and of the condition in which I am, I have only to trust in God and in your goodness, and that of all those dear gentlemen who have all along had so much consideration for me. I ought not to think so much of myself as of the proprietor of the apartment. I commend him to the charity of all. He, rather than give me into the hands of the mob, exposed his own life, the life of his wife, and all their property. At the least, let us endeavour to repair the loss of the furniture of the hall I occupied, and of the little chamber kindly lent me. Indeed I believe some token of gratitude due to a man who has risked everything for the life of a servant of the Lord.

"I have the strongest conviction that I should return as soon as possible to Barletta. No one can conceive the ardour which I experience. The work is extraordinary, and woe to us if we do not do our duty. I only ask that you give me the means to settle my son at Florence, and to have made a suit of clothes that I may present myself in public. If the dear friends do not think of my feelings, let them at least think of the great work, for great is their responsibility before God. This is the third time that my life has been miraculously saved, and, by the grace of God, I feel myself always more strengthened in the faith of the Son of God, and I shall be content to die for the work of the Lord. I pray you to answer me quickly, and to give me good hopes of not being disappointed in my purpose, the facts being as they are.

"I forgot to tell you of the cry of that furious mob. Some carried aloft the *cross*, and cried 'Viva la fede!' 'Viva Iddio!' 'Viva il Re Vittorio Emanuele!' 'Viva Garibaldi, e morte ai Protestanti!' Such were the frantic cries of that mob. Pray to the Lord for me. The state of my health is not bad. What oppresses me at present is confusion of head, which prevents my doing anything; only there passes before me continually my murdered brothers.

"I commend myself to the Lord Jesus, who alone can dispose all, and do for me that which is for the good of my soul. Many Christian salutations to your dear lady, and may the good God pour down upon you and upon all your dear family all His holy blessings.

"Your affectionate servant and brother in Christ Jesus, our hope,

(Signed)

"GAETANO GIANNINI.

"P.S.—If, after correcting it, you please to give my letter publication abroad, you may rely upon its entire veracity."

Translation of a letter from the Rev. T. Meyer published in the
 “Raccoglitore Evangelico :”—

“DEAR BROTHER IN JESUS CHRIST,

“The melancholy occurrences at Barletta having been fully described by those who, being present on that unhappy day, were better informed than myself, it only remains for me to give an exact account of what I myself saw and did in Barletta during my three days’ stay in that city. Several journals having spoken of my visit, and necessarily in an imperfect manner, mingling the true and the false, it is my duty to correct these errors, and furnish an authentic report. And here it may be asked, What motive, obligation, or duty was there for me to hasten to the aid of our distressed brethren? The answer is plain enough. Two years ago, whilst taking a tour in that part of the country, I passed through Barletta. There I was enthusiastically received, and had the privilege of being the first to announce the Word of Life. From that time I have always maintained a connection with the brethren of Barletta, and Signor Gianini, who established himself there during the past summer, has always been a dear friend of mine from the moment that we met at Ancona. Nearly every week he gave me intelligence of the progress and of the impediments that he encountered in his work. It was therefore most natural that, hearing what had occurred, I should feel constrained, not only by sympathy and Christian compassion, but from the friendship I bore to Signor Giannini, to decide upon going to Barletta, to offer to our afflicted brethren the little comfort and help which the Lord might enable me to administer.

“I arrived at Barletta on Friday, the 23rd of March. The town was crowded with military, and I had much difficulty in finding accommodation. Without quitting the hotel, I learnt that what my correspondent had written to me was only too true. I heard also that Signor Gianini had left the same day, and that his departure was regarded by the defenders of ‘the true faith and the true Church’ as a complete victory, the general impression being that henceforward the work of Evangelization was at an end in Barletta, and that no Evangelist would be permitted to establish himself there. I cannot describe to you the grief which this intelligence caused me. The following day my first object was to seek out and gather round me our dear brethren. This was not such an easy matter as it may seem. Frightened and discouraged, they scarcely dared leave their homes, and some who had taken flight had not yet returned. Still I succeeded in my attempt. During the course of the morning I saw a number of them, and could observe how much my presence stimulated their courage. It was regarded as an earnest of the sympathy and compassion that they would receive from all Evangelical Christians, and was, therefore, a source of comfort and consolation. But although discouraged and frightened, our brethren of Barletta did not waver in the least in the faith. Weeping and sorrowful, they still rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. Their greatest fear was that now their Evangelist having been obliged to leave, they would no longer have the privilege of hearing the Word of God. I asked them if they would have the courage to attend a meeting, in case I could obtain from the authorities not only the permission to hold one, but the promise of protection; all answered that they desired nothing so much.

“As my intention is only to give you a plain statement of facts, I will say nothing of what I felt while visiting the ruined houses, especially that in which the meetings were held. In it the traces of fire were everywhere visible; all that could be broken and torn was destroyed, and the fragments still strewed the ground. The stains of our murdered brother’s blood could be still seen on the walls and on the balcony from which they had hurled his corpse into the fire. Neither will I tell you how my heart bled on seeing the tears of the widow and orphans. He who would not feel overcome by a spectacle such as this must indeed be heartless. I had no other consolation to give but that of the Word of God. This, however, was received with faith and gratitude.

“The news of my arrival soon spread, and I could see how I was looked upon with an evil eye by all except our brethren, who every moment seemed to gather courage. About four in the afternoon I waited on the Sous Préfet, being presented to him by Signor de Martino, the English Vice-Consul. He received me with the greatest courtesy, and did not offer any obstacle to my request to be allowed to hold a meeting on the following day; only requiring that he should be informed of the place and hour, in order to take the necessary precautions. But here began

our real difficulty. It was impossible to find a Locale ; so great a till was the fear of the mob, that even the liberals refused to expose their houses to the danger of being destroyed. All feared a repetition of the horrors of Thursday, and deputations were sent to the sous-préfet to demand my expulsion. The permission granted us seemed therefore useless, and I had lost all hope, when one of the brethren, who keeps a café, spontaneously offered it for the purpose. He was perfectly aware of the dangers to which he exposed himself, not only at the time, but also for the future; but so great was his faith and his readiness to suffer everything for the Name of Jesus, that every other consideration lost its force. It was already three o'clock in the afternoon, when, accompanied by three of the brethren, I went to the Sous-Préfet, to give the required information; but to my very great surprise, I not only found that the meeting was absolutely prohibited, but that the Préfet of Bari had given orders for my expulsion. It is not necessary to repeat my conversation with the Sous-Préfet, a summary of it may be found in the letter which I addressed to the 'Corriere delle Marche.' I would not have left Barletta, at least of my own will, until I had been able to hold this meeting, as this was the only means of wresting from the hands of our enemies the victory which they thought they had obtained, and of making them see that the law is on our side, and grants us the right of free worship, so that neither the violence of a fanatical mob, instigated by its priests and preachers, the weakness of the authorities, or the unfriendly attitude of the National Guard of Barletta, could deprive us of this most precious right. Whilst I was still talking to the sous-préfet, a telegraphic despatch arrived from Florence, which put an end to all these doubts and difficulties. Having deciphered the telegram, the sous-préfet instantly granted the desired permission, and proceeded to give the 'Delegato,' who had been present all the time, the requisite orders for our security. The measures adopted seemed to me superfluous, but of this, of course, I was not the judge. Four o'clock had already struck when I left the sous-préfet, little more than two hours were left to warn the brethren and to make all the necessary preparations; but in spite of this short notice, before seven the Locale was quite full; another proof of the zeal of our Barletta brethren. More than eighty persons were present, and many were obliged to go away for want of room. Outside there were a few Carabineers and Guards of public security; but numerous patrols were in the neighbourhood, and at a short distance from the house, although concealed in the railway station, a considerable body of soldiers was posted. It is not, therefore, surprising, that our meeting was in no way disturbed; but neither on our dispersion were any of us molested in the slightest degree, an evident proof that the timidity and weakness of the authorities had given license to the audacity of the mob a few days before. I walked alone about the streets at ten o'clock at night, and did not perceive the smallest sign of excitement. Many gentlemen, with whom I conversed on the events of the day, rejoiced with me, and seemed to think that my coming, and course of action, had in some measure neutralized the violation of their constitutional rights.

"But what shall I say of the meeting itself? I have travelled over nearly the whole of Europe, and preached often under extraordinary circumstances; but this meeting was certainly the most remarkable that I ever attended. Strange enough, truly, and little adapted to the purpose, was the place itself—with its counter, its bottles, and all the apparatus of a café. However, this was of little importance, for our God does not 'dwell in temples made with hands; He is a spirit, and would be worshipped in spirit and in truth.' But a few days previously the greater number of those present had been obliged to seek safety in flight or concealment; some had suffered the loss of all things, every wound was still fresh and bleeding, and none of us could tell whether he would return alive to his house that night. The circumstances suggested the text—Luke, chap. vi. verses 22 and 28. All were impressed, and the brethren felt themselves strengthened and comforted. In my discourse I consoled them with the promises of the Word of God, and added that they might rely upon the sympathy, compassion, and charity of Evangelical Christians everywhere, and that that compassion would not be shewn in words only, but in deed and in truth. I gave them the assurance that all Evangelical Christians would unite to repair their losses and sufferings, and to continue the preaching of the Gospel amongst them. Shall not my promises be made good? Will Evangelical brethren permit that I should have held out false hopes? If ever there was a case that called for the active assistance of all our Evangelical brethren, it is that of our brethren of Barletta. The faith and patience that they manifested

in the time of persecution, and which they exhibit now that they are again left to themselves, prove assuredly that the work in Barletta is not superficial, but deep and sincere; and would it be possible that Evangelical Christians could abandon these their afflicted brethren without doing all in their power to repair the heavy losses they have sustained, to console, as far as man can do, the afflicted and distressed, and to re-establish the preaching of the Word? I never will believe it.

"Having attained my object, I left Barletta on Monday, the 26th of March. The accounts that I continue to receive are reassuring. The tranquillity of the city had not been further disturbed. The legal proceedings which have been instituted against the rioters, instigators as well as actors, have alarmed our enemies. Another attempt to impede the Evangelicals of Barletta in the free exercise of their religious worship, would not now be so easy. On their side the Barletta brethren are full of faith and zeal, and desire nothing but the return of their Evangelist.

"And the Roman Catholics of Barletta? They are either frightened, as I have already said, or ashamed of the conduct of their ecclesiastical superiors, while some are full of admiration at the behaviour of the Evangelicals, and seek instruction in our Evangelical faith. A Barletta brother, only a shoemaker, writes thus a few days ago to Signor Giannini:—'My dear Brother, come I beseech you, speedily to Barletta, for so many Roman Catholics come to my house to hear the Word of God that I cannot go on with my work.'

"I could say much more regarding the work in Barletta, on the excellent disposition of our brethren, &c., but both time and strength fail, and this letter is already long enough. With your permission I will recur to the subject in another letter.

"Your affectionate brother in Jesus Christ,

(Signed)

"THEODORE MEYER."

"Ancona, April 10th, 1866."

"BARLETTA, 16th April, 1866."

"ESTEEMED SIR AND BROTHER IN JESUS CHRIST,—

(He begins about matters at Milan, and then proceeds):—"I am now at Barletta. It is one of those situations in which one needs all the patience and prudence which come from God to be able to remain in it. After what has happened, the brethren are a little disconcerted, but not dismayed; on the contrary, they are but too courageous, for they would wish to have public meetings in the cafés; but I opposed myself to this, for having been called before the sous-préfet, he requested me to act with the greatest prudence, so as not to create new difficulties for the government while the prosecution is being carried on against the unfortunate men who, in their ignorance, were excited against the Christians. I promised to follow conscientiously his advice, so that if, unfortunately any new disturbance should arise, I may truly say that it has not been caused by me. I am meanwhile looking for a locale for Evangelization and for the school. It will be difficult to find one now, because the proprietors are still under the vivid impression produced by the burning of the houses and furniture; but when a little time has passed it will be easier to obtain a room. In the meantime, I hold meetings at the inn every evening. It would be too long to relate to you in detail what happened in this town on the 19th March, and besides you have seen it already in the newspapers. The damage done is certainly great. The value of the furniture and other objects burnt amounts to about 30,000 francs. The two poor widows are both ill. One of them whom I visited this morning is obliged to dwell in a wretched hovel, instead of the substantial and pretty cottage which she inhabited before. The husband of this woman died really like a martyr. When the riot broke out in Barletta, he was the first seized. They laid a wooden cross on his shoulders and beat him with sticks. When he fell, the ruffians who were murdering him besprinkled him with his blood, said to him, 'This is the blood of Christ; cry 'Viva Cristo!' and he said, 'Viva Cristo!' Then a priest came up to him and asked whether he would confess and acknowledge the Divine presence in the Host (riconseere il sacramento). Our brother answered that he knew Christ, and was happy to die for Him, but that he needed no sacrament; whereupon the infuriated multitude fell upon him and killed him. It is not known whether or not they dragged his body through the city. In my next letter I will give you more details.

"A collection has been made at Milan in favour of the sufferers and the widows and orphans. It has produced 124f. 13c., which I have delivered into the hands of

a committee which has been formed for the purpose amongst the brethren at Barletta.

"I shall be here for some time yet, but I suffer unspeakably, and cannot refrain from weeping every time I speak or write on these subjects, so strong is the impression I have received from the sight of the spot where these events took place. I see, however, that it was good that somebody should come here, and I thank God for having moved me to come. It is so sweet to comfort the poor afflicted brethren, and to strengthen them with the Word of Love, that I could not imagine a greater consolation on earth. The spirit of the brethren is not broken,—they are full of courage.

"The Government protects them as much as possible; the Sous-Préfet warmly requested me to have directly recourse to him on every occasion, and has shown much interest towards the Evangelical Christians. Pray for us, and accept, Sir, the salutation of your devoted brother in Jesus Christ.

(Signed)

"F. LAGOMARSINO.

"Our brother Cossù is with me in Barletta, according to the advice of Mr. Gordon."

As soon as intelligence of the terrible calamity reached us, this Committee (having by their agent, Signor Giannini, begun the work at Barletta, and thence feeling their responsibility) took immediate steps for collecting money to afford early relief to the sufferers, some of which has been already sent. We have since learned that a Special Committee has been formed at Florence, having the like object in view. Appeals to the sympathy of the Christian public having thus been made by two Committees, it became necessary to divide the work to be accomplished, and it has been consequently arranged that the Florence Committee shall undertake the relief of the sufferers, the widows, and orphans generally, leaving to this Committee the care of the Evangelist Giannini, and Philppo Fusco.

It is reasonable to suppose that the laws of Italy make provision for the indemnification of persons whose property has been destroyed under such circumstances; but in the state in which the kingdom of Italy now finds herself, such indemnity may be expected to be long delayed, if, indeed it ever be obtained by the people, and thus both Committees will find large demands on them; for on the Nice Committee will also devolve the obligation of providing for a more permanent teaching at Barletta, the establishment of schools there, and enlarged efforts for a wider spread of the Gospel in that neighbourhood, where it is evident, from information we now possess, the state of the people gives promise, under the Divine blessing, of a rich harvest; and to these objects will be devoted any portion of the funds received exceeding the sum needed for the other objects in view.

Contributions will be thankfully received by the Hon. Secretary at Nice; Herbert Mayo, Esq., Oak Hill, Hampstead; by any Member of the Committee; and by Messrs. Barnett, Hoare, & Co., 61, Lombard Street, London.

